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SUBJECT: MAURITIUS HOPEFUL REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S WAY
FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

REF: A. SECSTATE 122731
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 122234
[1](#)C. SECSTATE 123222

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: GOM reacted positively to the President's speech on the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (reftels) while Mauritius media coverage of the policy speech was mostly factual. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On December 1, the DCM delivered reftel points to Ambassador Gokulsing, Bilateral Affairs Director - Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gokulsing welcomed the announcement, noting that although Mauritius has no troops involved in Afghanistan, they remain strongly interested in U.S. decisions on its involvement with that region. Poloff also delivered reftel points to Ambassador Patrice Cure, Head of Multilateral Directorate - Political, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cure noted that while the job seems overwhelming, he is hopeful that the President's actions will succeed. He said he would try to watch the speech and requested a transcript be sent to him. On December 2, the DCM delivered reftel points to Acting Foreign Minister Burty David. David remarked that he had seen part of the speech on television and that he was encouraged that President Obama was sending the right signals, most specifically that with the additional 30,000 troops, the President planned to "finish the job." David also remarked that the GOM is pleased that the President noted the need and intent to focus on Afghanistan and that this focus is appropriate at this time.

[1](#)3. (U) Press coverage of President Obama's speech on Afghanistan and Pakistan generally was factual with a few opinion pieces remarking on the irony of a Nobel Peace Prize winning President deploying additional combat troops to Afghanistan. On its evening news program December 2, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation broadcast excerpts from the President's speech drawn from previous BBC World and TV5 Afrique. Many daily and weekly newspapers reported on the speech focusing on the President's decision to send an additional 30,000 US troops to Afghanistan and his plans to begin withdrawing them in 2011. On December 3, the morning daily Le Matinal carried an article from Agence France Presse "Afghanistan: Additional American troops are welcomed with mixed feelings." A leading French language daily L'express (December 3) published an article entitled "Obama faces tough sell with Afghanistan troop plan." The pro-Muslim weekly Impact News' (December 4) article was headlined: "Obama deploys 30,000 additional troops. Withdrawal in 2011." Impact News reported cited a Washington Post-ABC News poll, reporting that 48% of Americans are unsatisfied with the President's policies on Afghanistan. Newsnow, an on-line journal, posted an article from contributors in Washington and Kabul "The die is cast - Obama reaches out for Afghanistan end-game." Columnist Nad Sivaramen opined in L'express-dimanche: "When one becomes a Nobel Peace Prize winner, how is it possible to justify a choice for war?" L'express-dimanche also published an opinion piece from its foreign correspondent Gwyne Dyer, "In Search of a Decent Interval? Dyer observed "Some aspects of the President's

strategy even suggest that he understands how little really is at stake in Afghanistan for the United States."

¶4. In anticipation of the President's speech, Embassy Public Affairs posted a link to new articles previewing the speech on America.gov. A press release also was issued to major Mauritius news media announcing the date and time for the speech. The President's speech was first broadcast in Mauritius on the morning of December 2. Immediately following the first broadcast of the President's speech, a link to both the video and transcript of the speech was posted on the Embassy's homepage. A link to the America.gov webchats about the President's speech also was posted on the Embassy homepage.
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